THE ESTATE Of the POOR in SION COLLEGE *LONDON*, TRULY STATED,

BY

GEORGE DAGGET Attorney, and Clerk of the said College.

In a Letter to a Friend.

With *License*, *May* 5. 1688.

SIR,

FOR preventing further Mistakes, and saving my self daily trouble in giving Account to such as come or send to me for satisfaction, how the Poor of *Sion-College* are maintained, and for Vindication of the Reverend, the Governours of the said College, chosen Annually by the whole *London* Clergy, according to their Charter, who are unjustly reflected upon in this Weeks *Publick Occurrences*, I have here sent you a brief, but faithful Account how that matter stands, from the Register in my Custody, having been Clerk of the said College, for these thirteen years last past, and resided for the most part in the Lodgings appointed me by the Founders Will.

Now by the Books it appears, that according to the said Will, the Alms-people are recommended to the Governours for the time being, by the City of *Bristol*, the Merchant-Taylors Company, and the Parishes of St. *Dunstan*'s in the West, and St. *Gregory*'s, *London*.

And when the College, of two presented, have chosen one, the respective Presenters give the College Security by Bonds, not only to maintain and relieve them in Sickness and other Exigencies, but also in case of Death, to see them decently buried. And I am able to attest of my own Knowledg, that the said Presenters, especially the two Parishes, do visit and relieve them upon notice given; and the Alms-people are ready to acknowledg their kindness, except two or three of the Alms-men, that live idly, and spend their small Allowance, chiefly in Drink, to the scandal of all the rest.

I find that but two Women were buried from hence last year, one of St. *Dunstan*'s in the West, the other a Merchant-Taylor's Widow of St. *Giles's Cripplegate* Parish, both which were taken care of during their Sickness, and buried by the Church-wardens of the said Parishes, as they, and the Nurses of the Deceased, are ready to attest.

As to the *Ill Management or Misimployment* alledged in the *Weekly Occurrences*, It is well known, that the whole College and Alms-houses were burnt down, and quite destroyed by the Dreadful Fire, *An. Dom.* 1666. and that in three or four years ensuing, the Clergy of *London*, by their own Subscriptions, and the Charitable Contributions of others, Rebuilt the Library, and the Alms-houses under it for ten Men, and ten Women, in decent and distinct Apartments, which cost together 1300 *l.* and upwards; this was the first Care of the Governours, after the Fire, and the Alms-people sleep in the Dwellings built by the *London* Clergy.

And as for their *Pensions*, *being now but* 3 *l.* 10 *s. per Annum*, *whereas the Founder left* 6 *l. to each Person*; it is fit the World should know, That the Lands appropriated to the Alms-Houses, lye in the Hundreds of *Essex*, and were in the beginning of King *Charles* the First's Reign, Reported and setled by Judg *Crook* and others, to be such as would hold 120 *l. per Annum*, and by Order in *Chancery* were Demised to Mr. *Keeling*, one of the Executors of Dr. *White*, for 200 years, at 120 *l. per Annum*, for the Alms-Houses, without Impeachment of Wast; That about ten years since, the Right of the Lease came to a young Woman, a Descendant of the said *Keeling*, and was in the Custody of Mr. *Keeling* a Merchant now in *London*, which W[illegible]

Losses in her Estate (as Mr. *Keeling* proved) became so poor, as to be maintained by Charity, and so all benefit of the Covenant in the Lease was lost; and hereupon by reason of Rents falling, Mr. *Keeling* and his Tenant left the Lands and Houses without notice, and very much out of Repair, so that the Governours of the College then sent to the Aldermen of *Bristol*, the Company of *Merchant-Taylors*, and the Church-Wardens of the aforesaid Parishes, and some of each appointed by the said Aldermen, Company, and Parishes, met at the College, and at *Merchant-Taylors* Hall several times, and viewing the Title, with Counsel, sent down Agents to view the Lands, and Assist for getting a Tenant; who, after a years seeking, could not get a good Tenant, at more than 70 *l. per Annum*; and it was thus Leased for 21 years from that time, with Covenants for the Tenant to lay out about 200 *l.* in Repairs, the Farm not being Tenantable without it, and this was one reason more why the Rent was sunk so low; and it is to be feared, when this Lease expires, it will hardly yield 70 *l. per Annum*, by reason of great Damages through Sluces and Salt-water.

Observe, that the Poor of *Bristol* are not maintained by Lands in the Hundred of *Essex*; but *Bristol* will tell you, that the Lands there given them by Dr. *White*, were set apart by his Will, for repairing a Cause-way leading to the City, and they also are so sunk in value, that the City is forced to pay out of their Chamber, large Sums *per Annum*, to make up the defects of that Charity.

I know also, that of late years, the *London* Clergy, by their own repeated Subscriptions, and some Contributions, have built the College-Hall, and several Tenements near it, most of which are now let to Students and others; for which they have expended near two thousand pounds more, and contracted a great Debt, which they are endeavouring to pay by the same means.

Observe, that the Founder left 40 *l. per Ann.* for four Latin Sermons, and four Dinners every year; but since the Fire the Preachers Fee is lost, and the Dinners (which were discontinued for some years for want of a Hall) are now reduced to two in a year, and those (saving only three years) were all paid for by Contributions of the Clergy at the Bason, the overplus only being paid by the College.

I do not find much above 20 *l. per Annum* in Ground-rents about the College; (other Rents there are, but newly built, and not yet paid for); out of which, by the King's Quit-rent, Rent-charge to St. *Alfage* Parish, Parish Taxes and Duties, Library-keepers Salaries, Porters and Messengers Wages, River-water for the Alms-people, repairs in Tiling Glazing Paving, &c. the whole is expended, and as much more.

And now my Hand is in, give me leave to add, That whereas the Clerk's Salary was before the Fire 20 *l. per Annum*, with the use of the Hall, and fair Lodgings: I am now contented with 5 *l. per Annum*, and three Little Rooms, for the building of which, in part, I my self laid out 50 *l.*

And as to the 30 *l. per Annum*, mentioned in the *Occurrences*, *Lately left the College by a Counsellor, of which* (says the Writer) *they have had no Benefit.* The Case is thus:

Mr. *Brewer* late of the *Temple*, left by Will, a Farm in *Hartfordshire* to the Poor of *Sion-College*, which was Leased by himself for twelve years, expiring last *Lady-day*, for 27 *l. per Annum*, and that he dying in *March* 1684. the College hath been in Suits, both at *Common-Law*, and *Chancery* ever since, with the Heir and Executors claiming this Estate by Entails alledged; and that in *February* last, the Cause in *Chancery* came to a Hearing, where one of the Defendants appeared by *three or four*, and the College as Plaintiff, by *three Eminent Counsels*, and they obtained a Decretal Order against that Defendant, for the Land; but the other Defendant, to make more work, did not appear. The Charges of these Suits are near 70 *l.* paid, and to be paid out of the Arrears; and the College have already made a Dividend to the Poor, amounting to more than the over-plus in their Hands.

The said Mr. *Brewer* left also his Library to *Sion College*, which is still detained by the Executors, alledging that they have not Assits sufficient to pay the Testators Debts; by which you may observe, That the College takes care in the first place of the *Poor's Right*, and I have good Assurance that they intend to do so, tho it be to their own Damage.

And this, Sir, I hope, is enough to satisfie you and all others. I only wish, That this Paper may be made as publick as the *Occurrences*.

I rest,

From my Lodgings in *Sion* College, *May* 4. 1688.

Yours, &c.

GEORGE DAGGET.

LONDON,

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